

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 26, 2021

2:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Josiah Patkotak, Chair
Representative Grier Hopkins, Vice Chair
Representative Calvin Schrage
Representative Sara Hannan
Representative George Rauscher
Representative Mike Cronk
Representative Ronald Gillham
Representative Tom McKay

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Zack Fields

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 22

"An Act repealing the termination date for the intensive management hunting license surcharge."

- MOVED SB 22 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 10

"An Act relating to the Funter Bay marine park unit of the state park system; relating to protection of the social and historical significance of the Unangax cemetery located in Funter Bay; providing for the amendment of the management plan for the Funter Bay marine park unit; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 22

SHORT TITLE: INTENSIVE MGMT SURCHARGE/REPEAL TERM DATE

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) REVAK

01/22/21	(S)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/8/21
01/22/21	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/22/21	(S)	RES, FIN

02/12/21 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 02/12/21 (S) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 02/15/21 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 02/15/21 (S) Moved SB 22 Out of Committee
 02/15/21 (S) MINUTE(RES)
 02/17/21 (S) RES RPT 3DP 2NR
 02/17/21 (S) DP: REVAK, STEVENS, MICCICHE
 02/17/21 (S) NR: KIEHL, KAWASAKI
 03/02/21 (S) FIN AT 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532
 03/02/21 (S) Heard & Held
 03/02/21 (S) MINUTE(FIN)
 03/08/21 (S) FIN RPT 5DP
 03/08/21 (S) DP: STEDMAN, BISHOP, WILSON, OLSON, VON
 IMHOF
 03/08/21 (S) FIN AT 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532
 03/08/21 (S) Moved SB 22 Out of Committee
 03/08/21 (S) MINUTE(FIN)
 03/10/21 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)
 03/10/21 (S) VERSION: SB 22
 03/12/21 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 03/12/21 (H) RES, FIN
 03/24/21 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
 03/24/21 (H) Heard & Held
 03/24/21 (H) MINUTE(RES)
 03/26/21 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 10

SHORT TITLE: FUNTER BAY MARINE PARK: UNANGAN CEMETERY
 SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) HANNAN

02/18/21 (H) PREFILE RELEASED 1/8/21
 02/18/21 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 02/18/21 (H) RES, FIN
 02/24/21 (H) TRB REPLACES FIN REFERRAL
 02/24/21 (H) BILL REPRINTED
 03/01/21 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
 03/01/21 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 03/03/21 (H) RES REFERRAL MOVED TO AFTER TRB
 03/03/21 (H) BILL REPRINTED
 03/09/21 (H) TRB AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
 03/09/21 (H) Heard & Held
 03/09/21 (H) MINUTE(TRB)
 03/11/21 (H) TRB AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
 03/11/21 (H) Moved HB 10 Out of Committee
 03/11/21 (H) MINUTE(TRB)
 03/12/21 (H) TRB RPT 4DP
 03/12/21 (H) DP: FIELDS, ORTIZ, CRONK, ZULKOSKY

03/26/21

(H)

RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE SARA HANNAN

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, introduced HB 10.

TIM CLARK, Staff

Representative Sara Hannan

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented a PowerPoint on HB 10 on behalf of Representative Hannan, prime sponsor.

PRESTON KROES, Superintendent

Southeast Region

Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (Alaska State Parks)

Department of Natural Resources

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided information and answered questions during the hearing on HB 10.

MARTIN STEPETIN

Friends of Admiralty Island

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 10.

OKALENAY PATRICIA-GREGORY, Administrator

Aleutian and Pribilof Islands Restitution Trust

Unalaska, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 10.

JOEL BENNETT

Friends of Admiralty Island

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 10.

ACTION NARRATIVE

2:00:09 PM

CHAIR JOSIAH PATKOTAK called the House Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. Representatives McKay, Cronk, Hopkins, Gillham, Hannon, Rauscher, and Patkotak were

present at the call to order. Representative Schrage arrived as the meeting was in progress.

SB 22-INTENSIVE MGMT SURCHARGE/REPEAL TERM DATE

[2:01:25 PM](#)

CHAIR PATKOTAK announced that the first order of business would be SENATE BILL NO. 22 "An Act repealing the termination date for the intensive management hunting license surcharge."

[2:02:05 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS moved to report SB 22 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, SB 22 was reported out of the House Resources Standing Committee.

[2:02:25 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 2:02 p.m. to 2:05 p.m.

HB 10-FUNTER BAY MARINE PARK: UNANGAN CEMETERY

[2:05:32 PM](#)

CHAIR PATKOTAK announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 10, "An Act relating to the Funter Bay marine park unit of the state park system; relating to protection of the social and historical significance of the Unangax cemetery located in Funter Bay; providing for the amendment of the management plan for the Funter Bay marine park unit; and providing for an effective date."

[2:05:47 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SARA HANNAN, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, introduced HB 10. She described Funter Bay's location west of Juneau and its history of being populated in 1942 by forcibly relocating the Unangax of the Pribilofs, whose homes were occupied by the U.S. military following the Japanese invasion of the Aleutian Islands. The Unangax were abandoned in old cannery bunkhouses, with unsanitary living conditions, inadequate food supply and no medical care. Later, under threat of not being allowed to return to their homes after the war, the men were returned to the Pribilofs to harvest seal as a source of revenue for the federal government. The Unangax suffered

needlessly in the camp for two years after it was deemed safe to return home, and many died and were interred in a cemetery in Funter Bay.

[2:10:33 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN continued her introduction by saying that the proposed legislation would move 251 acres into the existing Funter Bay State Marine Park, which has been established for approximately 30 years. It would transfer the land management of the parcel in question from the Division of Mining Land and Water to the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (Alaska State Parks) within the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). She said that it would "protect, permanently, the cultural, social, and historical significance of the cemetery." She said that the descendants of the survivors of the relocation camp have continued to visit the location and tend the gravesites, and many of the Unangax remained in southeast Alaska and developed close ties with the Tlingit. Representative Hannan noted that the push to give the Funter Bay parcel this protection began about 10 years ago, when the new owners of the cemetery for another relocation camp at Killisnoo cut off visitation to the cemetery. As the Funter Bay cemetery is surrounded by private, national forest and national monument lands, the descendants wanted to ensure that the graves were not disturbed, as well as to enshrine the historical significance of the area.

[2:14:14 PM](#)

TIM CLARK, Staff, Representative Sara Hannan, Alaska State Legislature, presented a PowerPoint showing pictures of housing ruins, the cemetery, and a close-up of a gravestone, as well as a map showing the existing Funter Bay State Marine Park and the addition of the land. He noted that the addition of the land to the existing state park would connect two separate parcels of land and would make management of the land more efficient. He read from the slide titled "HB 10 will:" which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Provide protection of the Unangan Cemetery in Funter Bay for future generations;
- Transfer cemetery site and surrounding area from Division of Mining, Land and Water (DNR) to the Division of Parks and Recreation (DNR);

- Transferred land will become part of, and continue to be maintained, as part of the Funter Bay Marine Park.

[During the PowerPoint presentation, Chair Patkotak handed the gavel to Vice Chair Hopkins.]

[2:18:54 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER stated support for HB 10. He asked if this is the exact same legislation was heard in the House Resources Standing Committee in the Thirty-First Alaska State Legislature, and what, if any, changes have been made.

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN said that there have been acreage changes and wording changes in the bill, and referred to land surveys in the former and current bills. She said that when the previous bill left the House Resources Standing Committee last year the language in it included several acres that were already in the existing state park, and the Senate Resources Standing Committee corrected that error.

MR. CLARK added that HB 10 is identical to the bill that previously passed the House, after amendment, in the Thirty-First Alaska State Legislature.

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER asked whether the "changes happened in the Senate."

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN clarified that this bill reflects the final survey looked at by the Senate Resources Standing Committee [during review of the former bill considered during the Thirty-First Alaska State Legislature], and that the error in the survey was caught by DNR in the process.

[2:22:43 PM](#)

PRESTON KROES, Superintendent, Southeast Region, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (Alaska State Parks), Department of Natural Resources, said that he is also unclear as to where the bill was previously amended.

[2:23:11 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER asked whether all relevant agencies support this bill.

MR. CLARK assured the committee that the only amendment to the bill in the Thirty-First Alaska State Legislature was the one that corrected the acreage discrepancy, and it took place on the House floor on the day of passage, after which the bill was left unamended following passage of the House.

[2:24:11 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GILLHAM noted that there are 23 gravesites in the cemetery over less than an acre, and asked why 251 acres are needed.

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN clarified that, according to Admiralty Island National Monument, there are 23 gravestones but 32 known burials. She said that the acreage specification is due to the recommendation by DNR to combine the lands for more efficient land management, which would also nullify the need for additional surveys.

REPRESENTATIVE GILLHAM asked, "There are 10 private areas in that cove, is that correct? Have you spoken to those people?"

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN replied that Funter Bay in total has more than 10 parcels, that the residents adjacent to the cemetery area have actively engaged in this process, and that they have not expressed any opposition.

[2:26:39 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCKAY asked whether there are any Unangax descendants remaining in the area.

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN replied that there are descendants who stayed local, and said that a constituent and descendant of camp survivors is waiting to testify.

REPRESENTATIVE MCKAY asked if the title to the land is clear as far as mining easements or rights-of-way.

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN said that to her knowledge there are no title or access issues, but that DNR is available to address that question.

[2:28:27 PM](#)

MR. KROES said that no mining claims are in the 251 acres that would be added to the Funter Bay State Marine Park; the area had

been categorized by Mining Land and Water as recreational property with little to no natural resource extraction possibilities.

[2:29:49 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS referred to page 2 of the sponsor statement where it discussed the removal of the men from the camp each summer to harvest seal for the government, and noted the importance of this bill.

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN replied that it's the activism of the affected citizens that made this legislation possible.

[2:33:33 PM](#)

CHAIR PATKOTAK opened public testimony on HB 10.

[2:33:57 PM](#)

MARTIN STEPETIN, Friends of Admiralty Island, testified in support of HB 10. He said that his grandparents were survivors of the Funter Bay camp; his grandmother was 16 years old, and his grandfather was sent back to the Pribilof Islands to harvest seal, which was the main economic driver at the time. He noted that Alaska was a territory and that he doesn't blame the state for what happened; he said that it was solely the fault of the federal government, which the Aleut people, along with interned Japanese American citizens, successfully sued. Now, he said, the opportunity to protect Funter Bay and the graves lies with the state.

[2:38:43 PM](#)

OKALENAY PATRICIA-GREGORY, Administrator, Aleutian and Pribilof Islands Restitution Trust, testified in support of HB 10. She identified herself as an Aleut descendant. She described the importance of recognizing these sites. She listed the number of deaths in each camp and gave special recognition to the 42 Aleuts who were taken to Japan, over half of whom died.

[2:42:07 PM](#)

JOEL BENNETT, Friends of Admiralty Island, testified in support of HB 10. He said that he has been a Juneau resident since 1968 and that he wanted to speak from the perspective of a landowner adjacent to the cemetery. He said that several of the local

residents have been acting as unofficial caretakers of the cemetery and spoke about the lack of commercial resources in the area, describing the land as being used primarily for recreation and hunting. He also described the activities of the organization Friends of Admiralty Island and said that the group supports HB 10.

[2:46:07 PM](#)

CHAIR PATKOTAK, after ascertaining that no one else wished to testify, closed public testimony on HB 10.

[2:46:34 PM](#)

MR. KROES said that the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation would be honored to accept the parcel specified in HB 10 to protect the cemetery. He noted that the exact number of graves in the area is still unclear, but that it appears that 49 people died, with some buried in Juneau but others returned to Funter Bay for burial. He also said that the total of 251 acres is because of simplicity; that the parcel is currently DNR land and would remain so, changing hands from the Division of Mining Land and Water to Alaska State Parks.

[2:50:23 PM](#)

CHAIR PATKOTAK announced that HB 10 would be held over.

[2:52:57 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Resources Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 2:53 p.m.